

Be Prepared with Policies!

It is important for child care providers to plan and be prepared for emergencies and disasters. When policies and procedures are in place, staff, children and parents know what to do in an emergency situation. This helps to decrease panic, resulting in better outcome for all involved. A few policies important to consider are: illness, injuries, allergic reactions, dangerous weather, and fire. Policies about sanitation procedures, inspection of equipment and toys are also important.



Why have written policies?

- Promotes and protects the health and safety of children and staff.
- Advance planning can avoid a crisis and help set aside fear/ lessen stress.
- Helps staff, parents and children to understand what their role is.
- Helps ensure that practices are consistent throughout the facility.
- It may also decrease liability.

Policy Writing Considerations

It is always important that your policy:

- Fits the purpose for which it was intended to be used.
- Makes sense to everyone that it affects, including parents and staff.
- Can be put into practice at the facility.
- Is accurate and contains current practices.
- Meets or exceeds state regulations for the type of facility.

Who should be involved in writing the



policies? Staff, parents and board members, emergency personnel, legal council, medical personnel, law enforcement, county extension or other professionals with expertise on the policy topic.

What should your policies look like?

- Title of policy (*The health goal covered.*)
- Belief Statement/Intent Statement (*The purpose of the policy and why the policy is necessary.*)
- Procedure/Practice/Responsible Person (*Steps necessary to take to accomplish what the policy recommends.*)
- Communication (*How families and staff will be informed of the policy?*)
- Applicable (*To whom does the policy apply?*)
- References (*Sources of information for the policy*)
- Review (*Names of those who reviewed the policy*)
- Effective date and Review date

Getting others to follow policies

- A policy is helpful only when it is followed. Try to be pro-active (prevention-oriented), rather than reactive, when developing policies.
- Make sure everyone affected knows when old policies are being reviewed or new ones are being written.
- Inform everyone again after the changes are completed, and let them know about the review date.
- Send a written statement to parents and staff to review, sign and return.
- **Be Firm:** Do not to make exceptions once the policy is in place. For the policy to be effective, it must be followed by everyone.
- A monitoring system should be in place to assure that policies and procedures are being followed. Check lists are usually the easiest way to accomplish this.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children 2002; <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>
Model Child Care Health Policies
www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org
National Association for Education of Young Children:
800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org
Bright Horizons Family Solutions:
www.brighthorizons.com/talktochildren or 617-673-8000.